



Testimony of Marian Leist, Vice President of Advocacy and Business Development for Harc, Inc.

For Human Services Committee Public Hearing Tuesday March 20, 2018

HB 5257: An Act Concerning Reports of Abuse or Neglect of Persons with Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

I am Marian Leist, Vice President of Advocacy and Business Development for Harc, Inc. We are a community based non-profit organization that provides services to 2200 people with intellectual disability throughout the lifespan in the Greater Hartford Area. I am testifying regarding HB527: An Act Concerning Reports of Abuse or Neglect of Persons with Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder. This act reduces the amount of time in which a mandated reporter has to file a report of abuse or neglect involving a person with intellectual disability or autism spectrum disorder from the previous 72 hours to 24 hours. Providers take their role as mandated reporters very seriously and try to ensure the safety of the individuals supported. Sometimes, more time is needed to determine if a situation warrants a report as abuse or neglect.

For instance, when an individual lives at home and arrives to day program with a bruise, organizations need time contact the family first to determine the injury's origin. If we reach out to a family and they do not return our call by the end of the day, we would be required to make a report of abuse or neglect even if we later find out that there is a reasonable explanation. This means that the family would be investigated unnecessarily, which puts undue stress on them. It also strains the relationship between the organization and family.

An investigation of abuse or neglect is a complex process that can be time consuming. The additional time allows agencies time to preliminarily look into a situation without unnecessarily affecting the individual or their family.

Respectfully,

Marian Leist

Vice President of Advocacy and Business Development

Harc, Inc.

Constituent of Cromwell